

NI Bulletin

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OBJECTIVES OF NUMISMATICS INTERNATIONAL

Numismatics International is a non-profit educational organization. The Objectives are to encourage and promote the science of numismatics by specializing in areas and nations other than the United States of America; cultivate fraternal relations among collectors and numismatic students; encourage and assist new collectors; foster the interest of youth in numismatics; stimulate and advance affiliations among collectors and kindred organizations; acquire, share, and disseminate knowledge.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: Individual & Club Memberships - \$20.00 Annually, Junior Membership (18 years of age and under) - \$15.00 Annually, Senior Membership (70 years of age and older) - \$15.00 annually.

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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Applications for Membership: The following person has applied for membership. If no written objections are received by February 1, 2005, the membership will become effective on that date.

Eric Leighton, P.O. Box 20, Port Greville, Nova Scotia, Canada BOM ITO

DONATIONS REPORT

David English Carmack	\$ 25.00	General Fund
J. William Davis	\$ 35.00	Publications
Warren O. Davis	\$ 5.00	General Fund
Richard M. Elliot	\$ 10.00	General Fund
David R. Hinkle	\$100.00	General Fund
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Bruce W. Smith	\$ 20.00	Publications
Susan F. Thornton	\$ 30.00	General Fund

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

HA30.A11H:2004:CPEMS

ALLEN, HAROLD DON

Past, Present, Future: A Canadian perspective on the evolving monetary scene. A talk by the author on the evolving currency of Canada given at the Fifth Educational Symposium of the California State Numismatic Association. Pub2004, 34pp, not illustrated.

James D. Haley, Book Librarian
Granvyl G. Hulse, Jr., Librarian, Emeritus

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

With the January 2005 *NI Bulletin* the format is changing to provide a new cover, and to place the Table of Contents inside the *Bulletin*.

Article supply for the *Bulletin* is running low so I am requesting members to submit articles, fillers, and possibly questions you may have and we will see if members have the answers. Remember, no articles, no *Bulletin*!

BRIEF COMMENTS ON SELECTED UNUSUAL CURRENCIES OF THE WORLD

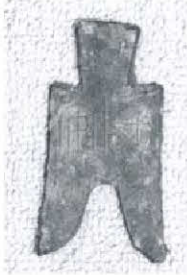
By Gordon J. Robinson

ASIA - CHINA

Knife, Spade, Fish, Chime and Cowry Currency

In China, during the Shang Dynasty (Pre~1 122 BC) and early Chou Dynasty (1 122 - 255 BC) a system of pure barter was the basis of all commerce until a small shell called the cowry began to make its way inland from the sea. These were beautiful shells, small and easily holed for stringing and transport. Due to their popularity, their value steadily increased and the cowry quickly became a standard of value in the area of Ch'u. As real cowries became more difficult to find, imitation cowries made their way onto the market until a bronze cowry was produced and then a bronze inscribed oval "cowry"-shaped piece called the "Ghost Face" coin. The "Ghost Face" coin was the final evolution of the cowry prior to the Chin conquest.

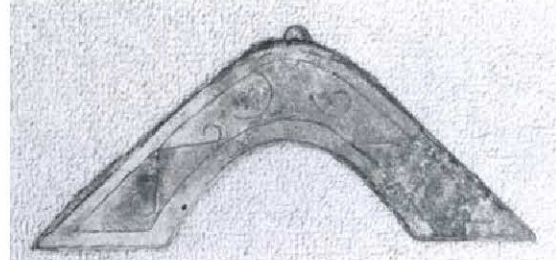
The knife, spade, fish, and stone chime coinage evolved in different country/states under similar circumstances as the cowry in Ch'u. Originally using swords, hoes, fish, and chimes as the standard measure of value in their areas of use, lighter "token" issues became representative of the usable implements or standards that had been used in the barter system. As time passed the "tokens", especially the knives and spades, became smaller and thinner until the conquest of the Chin Dynasty (255 BC). The Chin Dynasty not only "unified" the county under its name Chin(a), but also unified its currency system with the common square-holed round currency that most collectors are familiar with today.



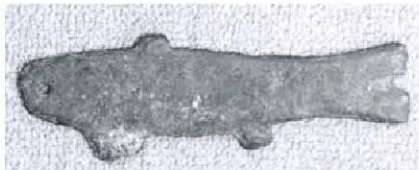
Point Foot Spade



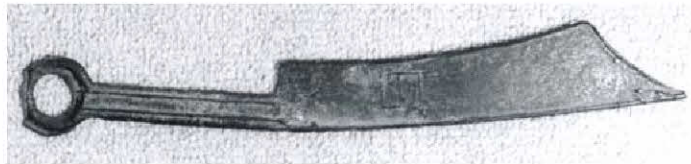
Heavy Spade



Bronze Chime Money



Fish Money



Pointed Knife Money



Broken Back Cowry Shell Bone Imitation Clay Imitation Bronze Imitation "Ghost Face" Coin

Han Dynasty usurper and original "Socialist" **Wang Mang** portrayed him self as a direct descendant of the historical emperors of China and wanted to promote this idea by bringing back the earlier forms of currency eradicated by the Chin. Though only "Emperor" for about 16 years (6 - 22AD), Wang Mang totally destroyed the Chinese economy, reducing many to cannibalism! Needless to say the people rose up and removed him from office permanently.



Value 50
Cash

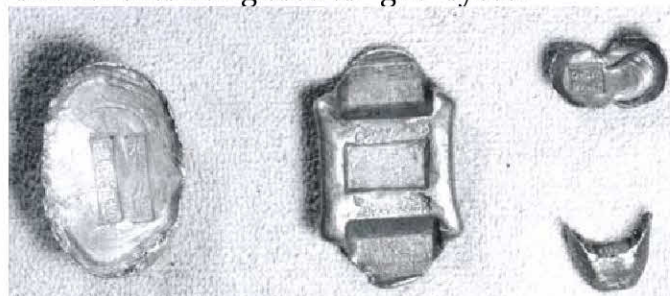
Value 1
Cash



Spade (Value 25) Knife (Value 500) Spade (Value 1000)

SYCEE INGOTS - (late 1200s to early 1900s AD)

Sycee ingots came onto the scene for general commerce probably during the Yuan Dynasty (1280-1368 AD). The ingots, mostly in good silver, but also in gold, were used in large transactions where the standard square-holed "cash" coins were impractical. Most (but not all) commercial sycees were one Tael (approx. 1 ounce) up to 50 Tael, with smaller ones being used as "gift" sycee.



Fine Silk Oval Pack Saddle of Yunnan Shoe "Gift" Sycee

BAMBOO CURRENCY - (1890s - 1920s AD)

China, not unlike the U.S., had its times of coin shortages. In the United States we see the issue of private tokens for commerce during colonial times, as well as the issue of “Hard Times tokens” (1820-1830s), during the Civil War (1861-1865), and again in the Great Depression in the 1930s. Bamboo currency in China was issued by local private banks and public houses during the end of the Ch’ing Dynasty and early Republic era to stimulate commerce (late 1800s - early 1900s). These tally sticks were made of bamboo strips with issuer and value burned in.



TEA BRICKS (mid-1800s to recent times)

Parts of China, Mongolia, Tibet, and Burma used tea as a form of money. Tea bricks were actually originally created by the Russians. Darker tea was considered more valuable, so, as in any area where money can be counterfeited, many tea bricks contain a portion of soot to give them a rich dark color. There were five grades of tea bricks in 1900, with the top grade being only high grade fermented dark tea leaves and the lowest grade containing mostly tea prunings, twigs, wood shavings and soot for color. In south China, the tea brick was made with tea leaves, sticks, herbs, blood and yak dung. In Tibet, worker wages were paid in tea bricks. In Mongolia, 12-15 bricks would buy a sheep, 20 would buy a camel.



1/16 Portion of “Communist” Tea Brick

JAPAN – (Shogunate Period to 1867 AD)

Japan, like China, Korea, and Vietnam, used the standard “square-holed cash” for their daily transactions. Often in larger transactions, quantities of the small cash coin were not practical. Keep in mind the “cash” was worth about 1/10 of a cent! Larger value units made of more precious metals were produced to ease these transactions (Cho Gin, Shu, Bu, Koban and others), as well as a paper currency called “Hansatsu”, also known as “Bookmark money”. Most of the metal issues were “official” issues, with the Bookmark money being issued by local clans.



100 Mon
(100 Cash) Copper



Mameitagin
Silver "Bean"



1 & 2 Shu
Silver



1 & 2 Bu
Gold



Cho-gin Silver



Hansatsu or "Bookmark Money"

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Thailand/Laos/Cambodia/Burma/Malay

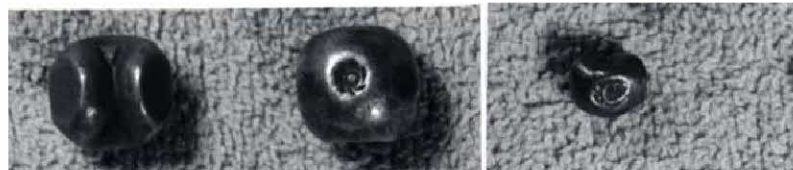
S.E. Asia is unusual in that it seemed to develop a currency quite unlike the rest of its Asian neighbors who were under heavy Chinese influence. With silver, lead and tin being the metals of choice, each kingdom/area developed its own unique currency. Many of the forms have religious or magical significance which, has mostly been lost in time. The plethora of currency designs and the evolutions of those designs are staggering! Bullet money, Tiger Tongue, Canoe, and Boat Lats, Tin Hat money, Toks of Nan, Leaf money (tok), "Pig Mouth" money (tok), Ka'kim, Siam bar money, and Porcelain Gambling tokens are all forms of the diverse currency of the area.

Bullet Money (*Pot Duang*)

1238-1868 AD Probably created by the kings of Su'kothai in 1300s AD by making small silver bars in standard weights (Baht and fractions), cutting the bar to show metal quality, and stamping the bar with official symbols. This production evolved into a very precise method of bending and marking the "Bullets" into their uniform and accepted appearance. Silver bullets ranged in denomination from 1/128th Baht (0.12gm) to 80 Baht (approx. 1200gm). Small gold Bullets also appeared in later reigns.



¼ Baht of Su'kothai
Kingdom (Silver Base)



"Modern" Bullets (1700s – 1868 AD)
(Good silver)

Lat Money

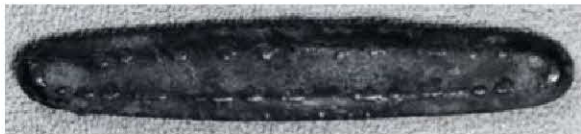
(1353-1889 AD) Created by the Kings of Lanchang (1353-1571 AD) as large base silver lozenge-shaped bars of a certain weight standard (one tamlung) with a smooth surface and official punches. A later series from the Kingdom of Laos (1591-1707 AD) called “Tiger Tongue” Lats had a better silver quality with unusual protrusions which look similar to taste buds on a tongue. Thus the name “Tiger Tongue” Lat. After the fall of Lanchang in 1571 AD to the Burmese, the surrounding tribal groups retained the currency form, including the Kingdom of Vientiane (1707 -1828 AD) and Kingdom of Luang Prabang (1707-1889 AD), and with time and debasement evolved the smaller, now well-known copper “Boat” and “Canoe” money which was finally outlawed as a form of legal currency in Thailand in 1889 AD.



Lanchang “Smooth” Lat
Base Silver



Kingdom of Laos “Tiger Tongue” Lat
.500 to .700 Silver



Vientiane “Tiger Tongue” Lat
Billon to Copper



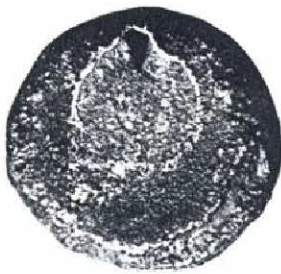
Luang Prabang “Boat Money” Lat
Billon/Copper



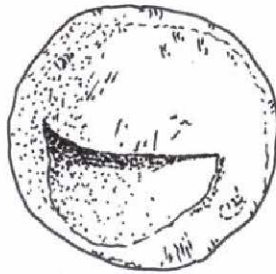
Luange Prabang “Canoe Money”: Lat (Copper)

Toks - (1200s -1770s AD)

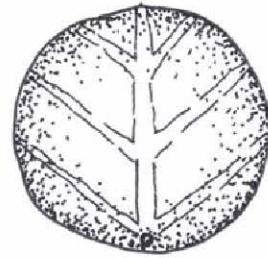
Toks for the most part are circular ingots of silver in varying grades of silver, depending on the area and time of issue. Toks of Nan, Chiang Mai Toks (Pig’s Mouth Money) and Leaf Money are all forms of the Tok currency. They were manufactured in “Tamlung” denominations and fractions thereof, with a “Tamlung” being approximately 62 grams. The Toks of Nan are solid base silver dome-shaped ingots with a small hole and characteristic red/brown glaze on the dome, made supposedly from chicken blood and egg yolks being placed in the Tok mold. Chiang Mai Toks have a characteristic thin hollow dome (usually broken) and are made of a higher grade silver, no glaze present. Leaf money resembles the Tok of Nan but has a ridge pattern along the solid dome which looks like a leaf vein. Comprised of base silver, leaf money had no glaze and was always holed. It is said that two Toks could buy a wife, but three were needed to divorce her! The Tok was demonetized in 1871 by the Thai government.



Tok of Nan
Base Silver



Chiang Mai Tok
Pig's Mouth Money
Good Silver



Leaf Money

Ka' Kim (also called Pack Saddle money)

This is another silver bar or ingot money from the Chiang Mai and Chiang Sen areas with a "twist". Made from about 1325 to approximately 1545 AD, this ring was stamped and bent in such a way as to show its core, thus proving its purity . . .but as with most items, counterfeits were made contemporaneously. Some numismatists claim that the unusual shape came solely from when the time when the King of Changmai split a piece of ring currency and bent it in two to prove the quality standard of his kingdom's currency. Another more plausible explanation is that the shape is rooted in Changmai religion and symbols of fertility. Ka' Kims are usually made of either high grade silver or of a zinc/lead mixture with the zinc/lead pieces being earlier and rarer.



Top View



Side View

Gambling Tokens

Porcelain Gambling tokens are well known to collectors of Oriental coins and are highly prized for their variety. Most of these tokens were produced from the 1760s to around 1875 AD. There are thousands of known varieties in this largely uncataloged area of numismatics. Proof has begun to surface that these colorful tokens were not only used in the local Chinese-run "casinos" of Thailand, but were actually used as small change in the areas of the "casino" district. The reason for the abundant variety is not that there were thousands of gambling establishments, but that the gambling houses changed the designs regularly to discourage counterfeiting and make a little profit by "demonetizing" the old tokens and forcing the locals to purchase current tokens.

A second popular gambling token known for its unusual material and designs is the mother of pearl gambling tokens of the same area. Mother of pearl tokens are hand-carved from the interior portion of the abalone shell. The most common shapes are the Fish, Rectangle, and "Football" shape, with many other ornate shapes known. Most of the mother of pearl tokens dates from the late 18th century to the middle of

the 19th century AD. The most recent theory is that these pieces were never used in Thailand, but were actually made in China to be used in European and American gambling houses!



Porcelain Gambling Tokens



Mother of Pearl Tokens

SOUTH SEA ISLANDS

Tobacco Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya, Solomon Islands

During World War II tobacco was introduced to the native people by servicemen stationed in the region. It soon became the currency of choice, along with newspaper (used for rolling cigarettes), after the soldiers left. Twisted tobacco sticks were manufactured in Petersburg, Virginia specifically for trade in the South Seas.



Twisted Tobacco Stick

Whale Tooth Currency - Fiji Islands - 1750s - 1900s. The tooth of a sperm whale as a unit of currency was called “tambua” by the natives. Whale teeth as currency were introduced to Fiji in the mid 18th century by Tambua traders. Mostly used in large transactions, in the 1840s one whale tooth could buy a canoe. A whale tooth was also presented by a man to a woman when he requested her hand in marriage. If accepted, it served as a binding contract and could be viewed like our modern engagement ring.



AFRICA

As with Asia, Africa is known for its wide variety of unusual local currencies. Two of the most popular metals used in Africa were copper and iron. Both metals were abundant and could serve utilitarian purposes, and thus were highly regarded. Unlike gold (available in western and southern Africa), which was only good for adornment, copper and iron could be taken to a metal smith and turned into most any item needed. Iron working was a very closely guarded secret and steeped in superstition and spiritualism. As only a few could smelt and work the metal into objects needed for maintaining a daily existence, the value of iron (although naturally abundant) and objects made from it were always in demand and thus retained great intrinsic value.

Copper also had religious significance to the Africans, thus adding to the desirability of that metal. Many of the African currencies take on some very unusual shapes (the meaning and intent of most of the shapes now lost) which were recognizable and accepted in local regional areas. The main worth of the currency was its metal value, as in how many hoes or knives or utensils could be made from it. In a way the pieces were a store of wealth.

Many of the copper items were made in wearable forms such as bracelets, anklets, neck rings, etc. Since women did most of the labor in West Africa, many were greatly hobbled and hindered in their work by the sheer weight and mass of their husbands' wealth! Interestingly, Stanley Livingston reported that it was considered an honor by the African women to wear the massive adornment. In fact, Livingston reported that the African women felt sorry for the European women who were with the Livingston group, thinking that the fact that they were not hobbled with copper meant their husbands obviously had no wealth!

Until recently, many of the African items were too rare and expensive to obtain for the average collector. Due to the modernization of many of the tribal groups, upheaval and political unrest in many of the African nations, and a hunger for U. S. dollars, many items are being brought out of Africa in enough quantities to make a good collection of African traditional currency obtainable for the average collector without being plagued with the fakes as the Asian series is beset with.

Nigeria / West Africa

Manilla - (1400s - 1949 AD)

Manillas are brass and copper bracelets and rings used as a currency in West Africa up until 1948 AD. Introduced by the Portuguese in 1439, manillas got their start as large heavy-gauge brass and copper bars bent into horseshoe and ring shapes. As the European slave trade began to heat up, the West African tribesmen began to desire greater amounts of the European brass, which they would eagerly trade for their weaker neighboring tribesmen! Many nationalities - French, English, German, Dutch, Spanish, and others - became involved in the slave trade and, learning that the manilla was the currency of choice to obtain slaves, started manufacturing the manilla themselves. The most popular of these manillas were the French 'Popo Manilla' manufactured in Nantes, France, and the "Birmingham Manilla" manufactured in Birmingham and other smelting towns of England. The English and French type manillas were not really brass but a 70% copper / 30% lead mixture hardened with

arsenic. A large percentage of the slaves obtained in the European slave trade (1400s -1870 AD) was purchased with the manilla! Originally requiring only one or two for a slave in the late 1400s, by the end of the slave trade it took hundreds per slave. The native West Africans started to manufacture their own types of manilla, which were often large and known as “King”, “Queen” and “Prince” manillas. Manillas were only acceptable if they had a good “sound”. They remained a key currency for all transactions in the Nigeria area, even though they were ceased being legal tender in 1911 AD. In 1948 the Nigerian government outlawed the use of manillas for any transactions and required all manillas to be turned in for government currency.

Over 32-1/2 million manillas were surrendered in “Operation Manillia”, in which most were sold for scrap.



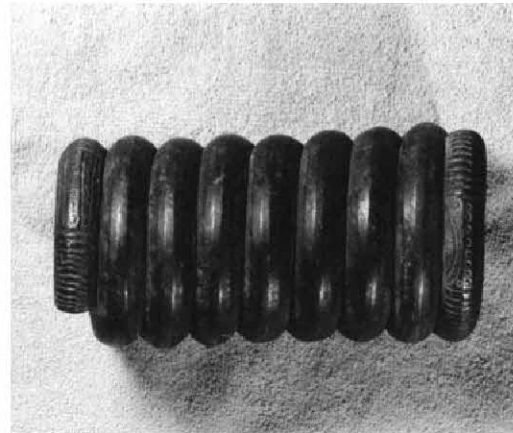
“Queen” Manilla



“Torque” Manilla



“Popo” and “Birmingham” Manillas

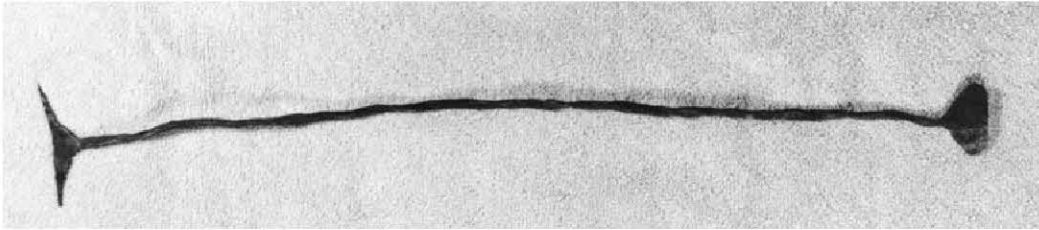


“Coil” Manilla

Kissi Penny - Liberia, Sierra Leone, French Guinea (1880s - 1930s AD)

The hand wrought iron currency of the Kissi and Loma tribes is one of the most well known of all odd-and-curious forms of money. The Kissi penny was thought to have a soul, and if a piece was broken a witch doctor was needed to “restore” its soul. Traded in bundles of twenty, in 1918 40 bundles would buy a cow and 60 to 80 bundles would buy a wife. In 1919, 40 to 50 Kissi pennies were worth one French Franc coin. Nearing the end of its use, the value of the Kissi penny had become so eroded that a pocketfull of silver coins converted into the local currency would require the services of a dozen attendants to handle the sheer weight and bulk of the

same value of pennies. Though Kissi pennies were outlawed as a currency and for paying taxes in 1937, they were still being used as late as 1970 in local rituals.



Kissi Penny

Dutsi Spike - Nigeria (Up to 1940s AD)

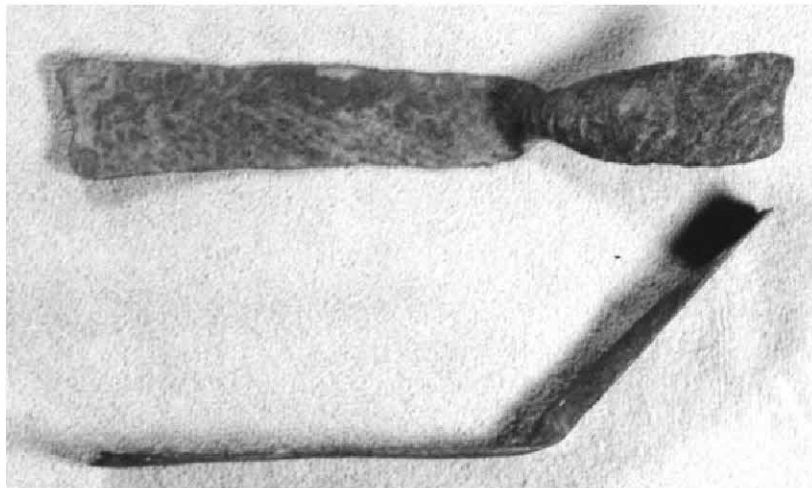
Another large iron “ingot” form of currency from the Dutsi district of the Kaduna State. Formed almost like a giant “Kissi” penny and used as a trade item with neighboring tribes.



Actual size approximately 33” long

Purr Purr Nigeria (1800s -1940s AD)

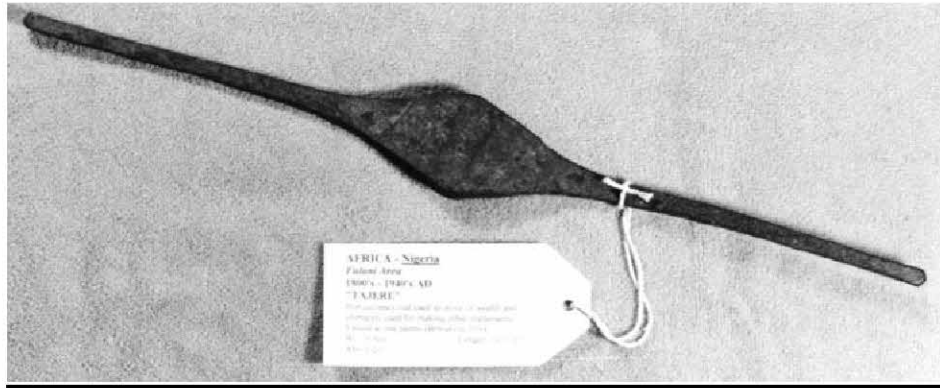
Purr purr is an iron currency bar which was in the shape of a type of hoe or farming implement, and was valued at three English pennies in 1939. Not usable as an actual tool, they were more of a store of wealth in a convenient size for transactions.



Top and Side View – Purr Pur

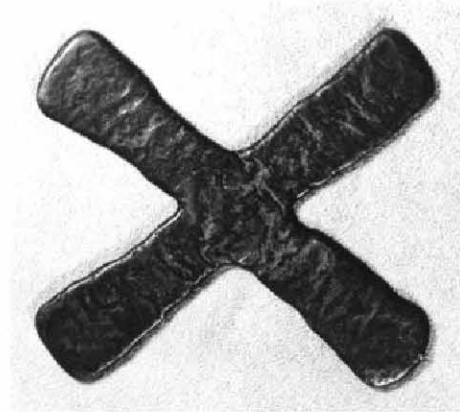
Tajere - Nigeria - Fulani, Batta, Mumuye Tribes (1800s - 1940s AD)

This is another local iron currency bar. Made by the Fulani tribe and used by subject tribes. A regular currency of the region not just the standard “bride price” currency. Valued at one English penny in 1934, its ultimate value was in the metal for hoe-making.



Congo / South Central Africa
Katanga Cross - (1100s - early 1900s

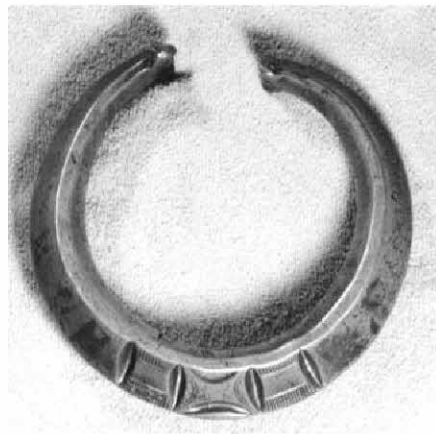
AD) Sand-cast red copper ingot, also called Baluba crosses after the Baluba tribe that smelted the copper in the Katanga region. One cross was valued at 10 kilos of flour, or 6 axes of iron. Ten crosses would buy a gun. A wife was worth 14 crosses, one flintlock gun, one female goat, and one female slave. The Katanga cross is very popular and well known. as an African traditional money. A less well known relative of the Katanga cross is the “H” shaped cross of Zimbabwe. It was used from the 1300s to the 1600s AD and varied in size from less than half an inch to over 12 inches in length.



Mbole Legband Currency- Mbole Tribe and Jonga Large split copper legband or anklet used as a currency and for “bride price”. Worn by men and women, it came in five different sizes. Values were in onglese, with “Diako” being value 2, “Ambi” value 3, “Ehuke” value 4 to 8, “Hatakataka” value 9 and “Batataka” value 10 onglese. Sized from 18 cm. to 35 cm. in diameter.

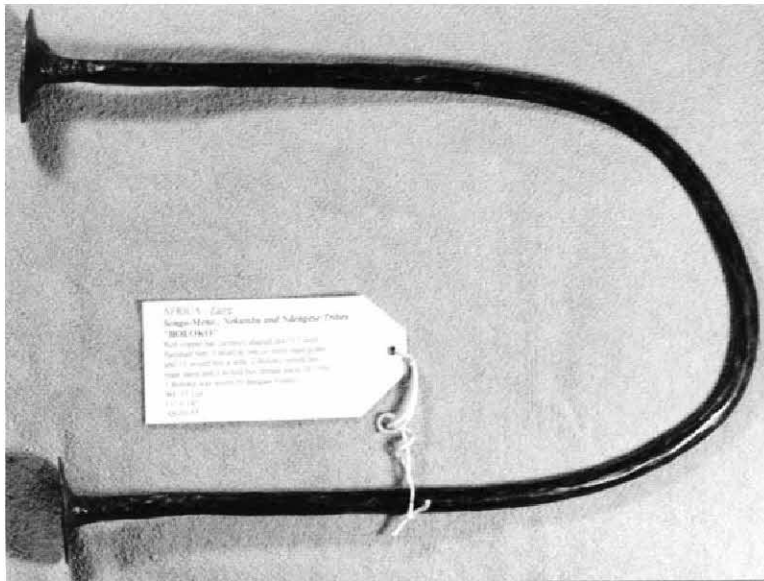


Neck Ring Money (1700s - 1900s AD) Copper and brass neck rings were used as a form of currency and store of wealth in the African Congo. Rings range in weight from 1/2 pound to as much as 28 pounds! Worn by the women (often as a show of husbands’ wealth), the neck ring was placed around a woman’s neck by a blacksmith who hammered the ring shut with the woman’s neck on the smith’s anvil. Proper removal technique required that vines be affixed to either side of the ring and to stakes many feet away from each other while the woman laid down between the stakes. The vines were slowly twisted until the neck ring was opened enough to remove the ring from the neck. The proper way was not always the way the rings were removed, however there are many reports of incidents of rival tribesmen decapitating women to quickly obtain the valuable rings, as well as husbands decapitating deceased wives to get the rings for their future wives.



Boloko -Zaire- Songo-Meno Tribe (1800s? - 1950s AD)

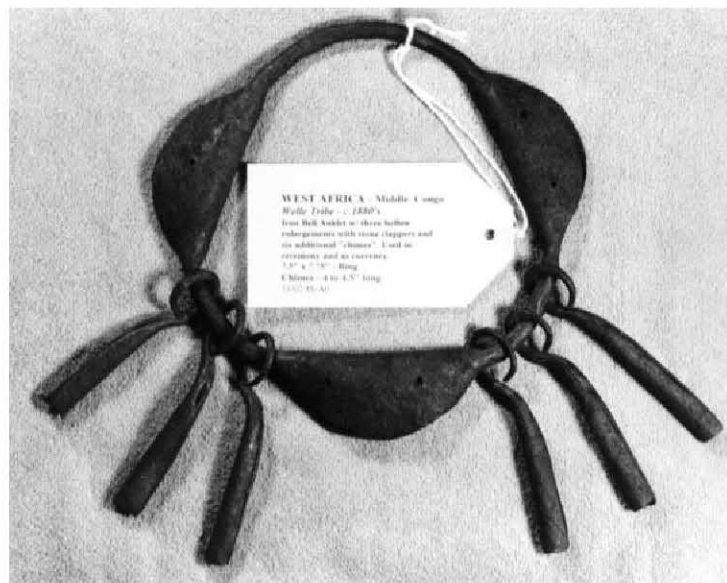
Made by the Nkutsbu from red copper, one boloko was valued at one or more goats (depending on the market). Ten were required to purchase a wife. Two would buy a male slave and three would buy a female slave. One boloko was worth ten kundja hoes, which were used further inland to trade for salt. One boloko was valued at 50 Belgian francs in 1950.



Copper Boloko – 14” long

Clatter Ring Anklet Currency - Welie Tribe (c. 1880s AD)

This is an unusual form of iron anklet money from the Middle Congo region, shaped like a large ring with two or more enlargements containing beads or stones. Valued as a currency, and also used in bride price. Used as a musical instrument in tribal ceremonies.

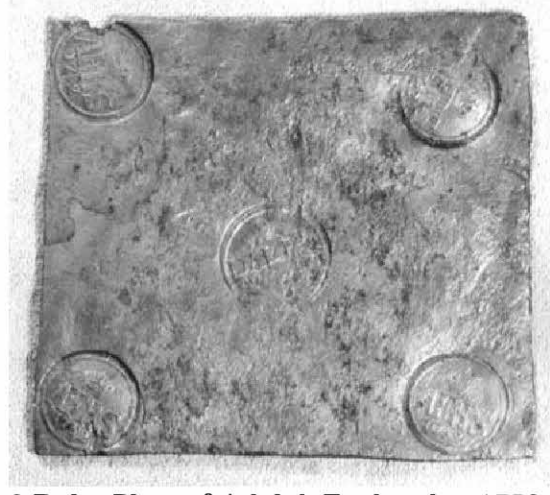


Iron “Clatter Ring” with Clappers

Europe -Sweden

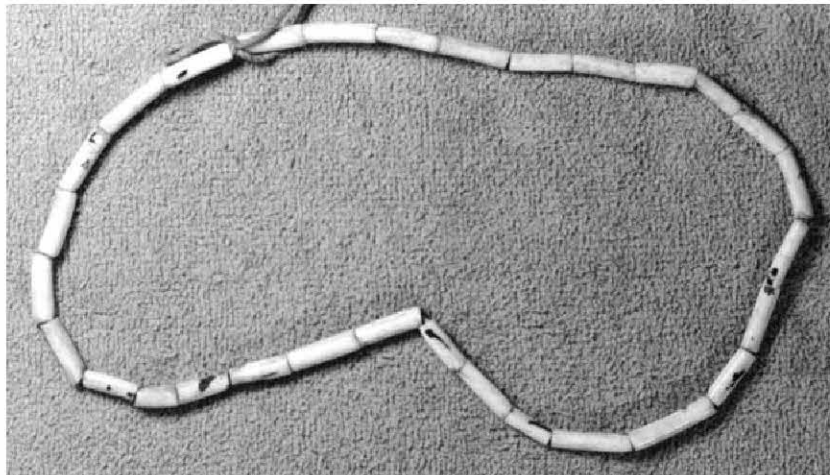
Swedish Plate Money (1644 AD - 1776 AD) Swedish plate money has the singular distinction of being known as the largest “coin” ever minted for general circulation. Due to the fact that Sweden had access to vast amounts of copper in its mines but virtually no domestic supply of silver, huge plates of copper were “minted” and were stamped with dies on the edges and center giving a “Syl:Mynt” or value in silver. Values known are the 1/2 Daler weighing a pound or more, all the way up to a 10 Daler weighing well over 40 lbs, with the most common values being 1/2, 1, 2, and 4

Daler. in its 132 years of use, over 48 million pieces of plate money were minted. Today only about 15,000 are still known to exist.



2 Daler Plate of Adolph Frederick – 1752 AD

Americas - North and Central Wampum (1500 AD? - 1890s AD) Wampum is a shell bead used by North American Indian tribes as a currency, for trade, and for ceremonial purposes. These same shell beads were also used by the American colonists as a currency from the earliest days of this nation and manufactured and used in trade with Native Americans up into the 1890s. The word “Wampum” comes from the Iroquois word “wampom” meaning mussel. Though the Iroquois claim to have invented wampum, the clam shell which true wampum was made from was not available in the areas the Iroquois controlled. Wampum became so popular as a trade currency, that the Dutch and English set up locations for manufacturing the shell bead. The most prolific manufacturer of non-Indian produced wampum was the New England manufacturer known as the Campbell Wampum Factory, which started in 1735 and continued production until 1899. The Campbell factory actually invented the standardized shape (11/16” to 1” long cylindrical bead) which today is stereotypically thought of as wampum. Although millions of beads were made by the Campbell factory alone, old wampum is considered rare today and is rather expensive (if you can find it).



Musket Balls (1630s - early 1800s) Lead musket balls of “full bore” were made legal tender in Massachusetts in 1635 though they were traded as a barter item prior to that date. Since defense was vital to the early settlers, “Full bore” probably refers to balls which could be used in a military type musket with a .50 to .80 caliber bore. As the colonists had no domestic source of lead, musket balls had to be imported and the rule of “supply and demand” played a major role in giving the balls their value. One musket ball was valued at one farthing (1/4 English penny) and they were only legal tender in quantities up to 48 (12-1/2 cents or one Spanish “Bit”).



Old Lead “Musket Balls” of various Calibers

General Barter Items / Pipe

1600s-1700s AD)

Tobacco was introduced to the Europeans and early American colonists by the Native American Indians...and they liked it! Clay pipes manufactured in England and elsewhere began to flow into the colonies. Although tobacco and pipes were not a necessity, as were musket balls, smoking was a coveted and enjoyed practice (habit) of the colonials. Due to the fragile nature of the pipes they were often broken, creating a constant need for new pipes. Thus, as with most items of barter, where there is a demand, the item's value increases. Pipes were just one of the many items which never obtained “legal tender” status but were traded openly in the market like a currency.



NORTH AMERICA - Colonial U.S.A.
1600's - 1700's AD
Clay pipes were a standard trade item in
the Colonies among the Colonists and also
traded to the Indians. Broken stem.
Ex. Howard D. Gibbs collection

Axe Money - Mexico and Central America (900 AD to Mid 1500s AD)

Copper “hoe money” or “axe money” is another very famous type of traditional currency in which many details of origin and meaning have eluded the modern numismatist. These copper axes were in use by the Aztec Indians from before Cortez’s conquest in 1521 AD until approximately 25 years after the conquest. Much like the Chinese “spade” coinage the Mexican “axe” money was symbolic of an item of value rather than an actual usable tool. The “axe” money was used by several cultures (Aztec, Zapotec, and Maya) in the Post-Classic period (900 AD - 1500 AD) of Mexico and it come in several different styles. During the time of Cortez, the axes were valued at four new polished axes to five Spanish Reales (5 “Bits” or 62-1/2 cents). If an axe were not polished it would not be accepted at full value, but at a greatly reduced value.



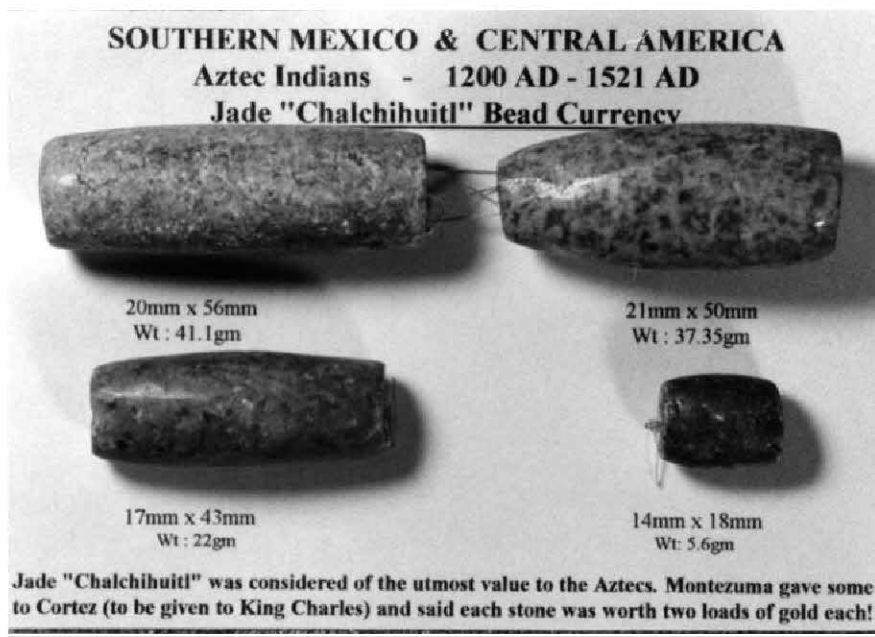
Thin “Chisel” Axe



Large and Small “Mushroom” Axe

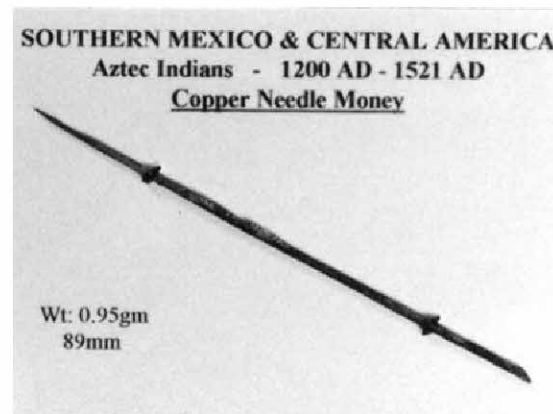
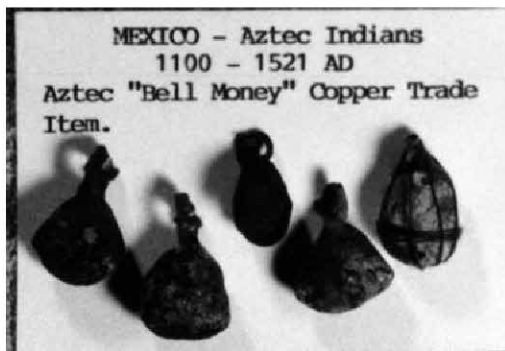
Jade / Greenstone Mexico/Central America (1200?-1500 AD)

Jade (actually jadeite and nephrite) was a VERY valuable item in Mesoamerica. It is said that the Aztecs valued one jade bead at 50 pounds of gold or more! Jade was thought to have healing properties to the indigenous people of the area and was also representative of water. Although mostly a currency of the elite, some evidence exists which suggests that it was in limited use by the lower classes as well. Montezuma himself required payment in jade as tribute in the 1500s.



Needles and Bells - Mexico/Central America (1100s? -1500s AD)

Another barter/currency of Mesoamerica, copper bells and needles were used predominantly by the Maya, and somewhat less so by other groups in their area during the same time period. Bells were valued by size – the larger the bell, higher the value. Also used in sacrificial offerings, possibly as a funeral money.



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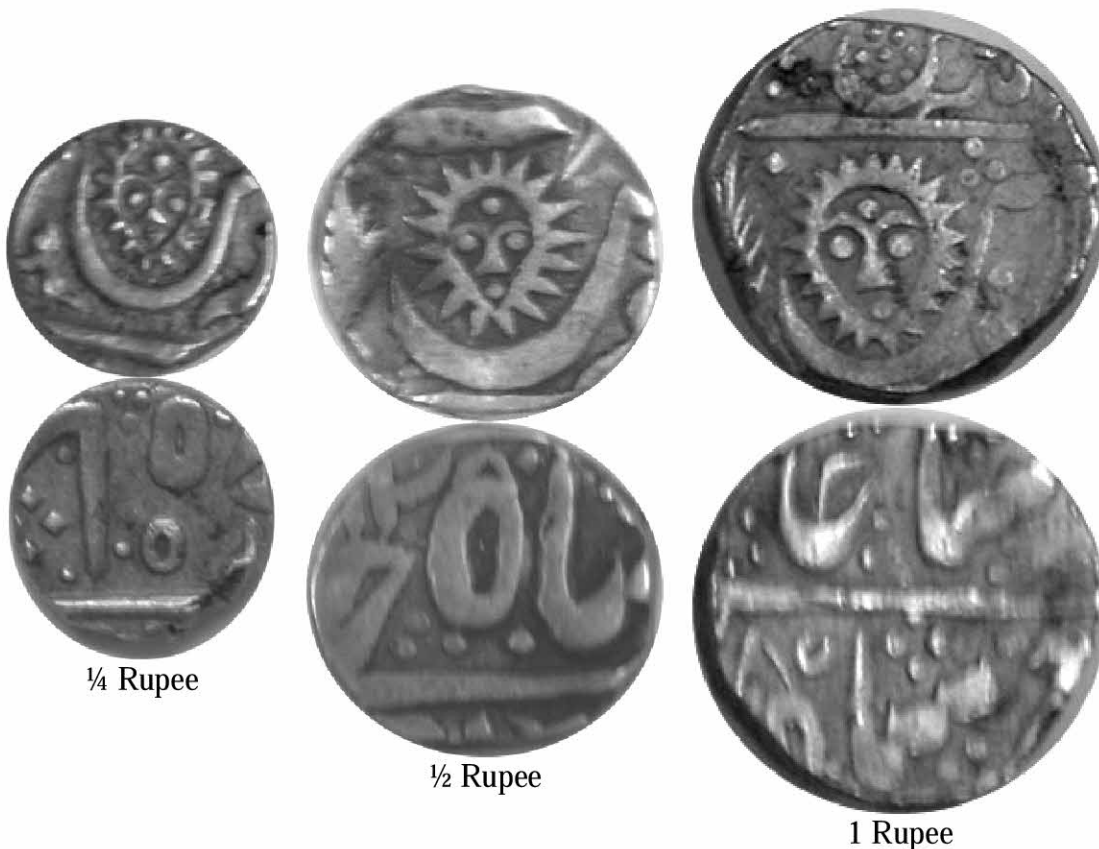
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IDENTIFYING INDIA NATIVE STATES: INDORE

H. L. Ford

For those who want to attribute coins of India in their collections but cannot read the many different languages which appear on the coins, Indore is a very pleasant discovery. Coins are easiest to identify if they have portraits or animals or weapons or any other physical object repeated in their designs, and Indore's coins make themselves easily identifiable for you. On many issues of the 19th and 20th centuries a bull moving to the left appears, and in the 20th century portrait coins exist for both Shivaji Rao and Yashwant Rao. A quick look at Indore in the catalogs will fix the designs for you.

Also, in the 19th century, on the rupees and fractional rupees, another recognizable design appears. We show below the 1/4, 1/2 and 1 Rupee.



The Sunface design is basic to the Indore coinage. On issues from the first series, 1888-1890, a Spear and a Scimitar cross below the Sunface. Also, on these issues two separate dating systems are used. The date of 1890 corresponds to 1295 in the Fasil Era (FE) system and to 1947 in the Vikrama Samvat Era (VS) system. On coins of the second series, 1890-1898, which is the series in the above photos, the sun may have either a dot, as was also true of the first series, or a U-shaped figure on his forehead. Only VS dates appear on the second series.

Indore had two major mints, Maheshwar, used from 1767 to 1803, and Malharnagar, located in the capital, Indore City, and used from 1768 to 1878. Only "Malharnagar" is ever spelled out on coins because Maheshwar also uses the word to honor the leader who founded the state, Malhar Rao I. Maheshwar actually identifies its silver coins with a Bliva leaf joined with a Lingam, which looks like a light bulb upside down; on copper it uses just the Lingam as its mintmark. At Malharnagar, the leaf is used only on copper coins. On some copper and most of the silver, the sunface actually serves as the mintmark. Other mints were used at times, but their productions are very, very different from the items discussed above. You will find an amazing array of different weapons, even cannons, used in the designs, as well as leaves, trees, banners, flags and many other things.

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